



Rome

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HISTORY

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Rome is the capital city of Italy, the home of the Vatican and the Papacy, and was once the center of a vast, ancient empire. It remains a cultural and historical focus within Europe.

In the Beginning

Located in the region of Lazio, Rome's origins are traced by legend to Romulus and Remus, twin sons of Mars, the god of war. According to Roman mythology, the brothers disagreed over where to locate the new city. Each brother stood on one of Rome's seven hills, and six vultures circled over Romulus, signaling Mars' favor. Thus, on April 21, 753BC, the city that is now a world icon was founded.

Gaius Julius Caesar

Gaius Julius Caesar once was considered as the most excellent military strategist and brilliant politicians of all time. Caesar conquest the Gaul by 51 BC. He was the first Romans General that built a bridge across the Rhine and commenced the invasion of Britain. The achievement provided Caesar's supreme military power. He implemented the reforms of government and roman society overthrowing the already existing government and proclaimed as the Dictator of Rome.

Christianity and Foreign Rule

Charles the Great was crowned King of the Roman Empire on 25 December 800. He embarked on a mission to unite all Germanic peoples into one kingdom, and convert his subjects to Christianity. At present day, the dominant religion in Italy is Roman Catholicism. It is not surprising, as Vatican City, located in the heart of Rome, is the hub of Roman Catholicism and where the Pope resides. Roman Catholics and other Christians make up 80% of the population.

Rise of Rome

Rome became the most powerful state in the world by the first century BCE through a combination of military power, political flexibility, economic expansion, and more than a bit of good luck. This expansion changed the Mediterranean world and also changed Rome itself. New institutions, such as provincial government, were created to deal with the management of empire; culture was transformed as outside influences, especially from Greece, came into fashion in Rome; and the city itself was physically transformed by the influx of loot and people brought by successes abroad.



MONEY



Euro notes come in seven denominations ranging from €5 to €500. The coins come in €2 and €1 denominations and 1-cent to 50-cent coins. Though most places in Rome accept credit cards, cash is still preferred. For street markets and small mom-and-pop stores and restaurants, this holds especially true.

Credit Cards

Visa and MasterCard are favored to American Express, but in tourist areas, American Express is preferred. Diners Club is rarely recognized.

Debit Cards

In Rome, Mastercard and Visa debit cards are accepted.



Visitors from the USA

Currency conversion on credit cards has different rates when traveling out of the United States. When you use your credit cards abroad, most banks assess a 2% fee above the 1% fee charged by Visa, MasterCard, or American Express.

ATM

In Rome, ATMs are called bancomat. They are available abundantly in the city, and most of them accept all international cards, including Visa, Maestro, MasterCard, and Cirrus. The daily cash withdrawal limit in the city is €250. In using an ATM in Rome, you will be prompted to choose your language. English will be one of the choices. Then you'll enter your four-digit PIN (make sure yours is four digits before you go).

HELPFUL INFO

Climate

The climate of Rome, capital of Italy, in the Mediterranean, with some slight elements of continentality. Winter is mild and quite rainy, but at night it can get cold; summer is hot and sunny, with a few rare afternoon thunderstorms. The best times to visit Rome are spring and autumn, from mid-April to mid-June and from September to early October.

Electricity

Electricity in Rome comes out of the wall socket at 220-volts alternating at 50-cycles per-second. In the US, power comes out of the wall socket at 110-volts, alternating at 60-cycles per-second. Not only the voltages and frequencies but the devices themselves are different. Wall outlets typically accommodate plugs with two or three round pins (the latter grounded, not the former).



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Technology & Communication

Roman technology is the engineering practice that supported Roman civilization and made the expansion of Roman commerce and Roman military possible for over a millennium (753 BC–476 AD). Telephones - main lines in use is 20.031-million (2008). While mobile users are 88.58-million (2008), free WiFi is widely available in hostels, B&Bs, and hotels, though with signals of varying quality. Some also provide laptops/computers. Many bars and cafes offer WiFi.

Infrastructure & Transport

Rome is in the Lazio region, along the Tiber River. Ancient Rome, built on seven hills - Aventine Hill, Esquiline Hill, Palatine Hill, Caelian Hill, Capitoline Hill, Quirinal Hill, and Viminal Hill. Another river, called the Aniene, passes through modern Rome. The city spans across 1,285-sq.-Km and stands at an elevation of 21-m above sea level. The area consists of urbanized regions as well as nature reserves and parks.



In Case Of An Emergency

No matter where you are in Italy, dial 113 for all emergencies or ask somebody (your concierge, a passerby) to call for you, as not all 113 operators speak English. Other useful numbers are 112 (police), 115 (Fireman), 117 (Customs), 118 (Ambulance), 06.488 2371 (English Speaking Doctors).

Language

Out of the thirty Romance languages descended from Latin, Italian is the most widely spoken language in Rome. Unlike the others, it still retains the Latin contrasts in short and long consonants, making it the romance language that most closely resembles the original Latin. The younger generation and people working in the tourism industry can speak English. Spanish, French, and Portuguese are also understood by some people, due to their similarity with Italian.

LGBT Travel

It's a major metropolitan city and with that comes a vast population of LGBT residents that live and work in the town plus countless travelers that come to behold the eternal city. But is still highly conservative (and homophobic) and influenced by the presence of the Catholic Church taking hold in Vatican City. In the evening on Via di San Giovanni in Laterano, the gay and lesbian community gather and have fun at the popular hotspot, located in front of the two cafe-bars; Coming Out and My Bar. Also, there is a membership card required for all gay cruise bars and saunas, usually the Andros card.

Religion

Most of the people are Roman Catholics, and the city is a famous pilgrimage center, being home to the Vatican City. Minorities include Muslims and Jews.



Getting There

Three airports serve the city of Rome. Leonardo da Vinci International Airport is the leading international airport. The other two airports are Rome Ciampino Airport and Roma-Urbe Airport. Leonardo da Vinci International Airport is well-connected to cities across the world.

Driving

It's obligatory to wear seat belts, to drive with your headlights on outside built-up areas, and to carry a warning triangle and fluorescent waistcoat in case of breakdown. Drive on the right, overtake on the left. Unless otherwise indicated, speed limits are as follows:

130-km/h on autostradas

110-km/h on all primary, non-urban roads

90-km/h on secondary, non-urban roads

50-km/h in built-up areas

THE EXPERIENCE

Culture

Rome has been a major cultural center since ancient times, which reflects in its famous monuments that stand tall till date. The Colosseum (70-80 AD), for example, was built by the Roman Empire was used for the mighty gladiatorial combats. The culture of this place refers to its rich history of arts, architecture, fashion, music, and cuisine. The famous fashion and jewelry brands find their place in Rome. The city is home to several operas and musical institutions and is well-known for its delicious cuisine, which mainly consists of meat, cheese, and vegetables. Rome has a vast collection of art, dating back to the Roman Empire.

Bucket List

Throw three coins into the Trevi Fountain

Join a Cooking Class

Visit the Fountain of Four Rivers

Drink from the water fountains.

Get a hand-drawn portrait or a caricature at Piazza Navona.

Family Travel Highlights

Take a tour at Campo de' Fiori

Enter a Gladiator School

Play around Explora Children's Museum

Take a Gelato Tour

Take a Family Friendly Pizza Making Class

Tourist Authority

The official A.P.T. tourist office is at Via Parigi 5 (tel. +39-06-3600-4399 or +39-06-488-991; www.turismoroma.it or, for a searchable database of everything tourist-related in Rome, www.060608.it). It's about a 5-minute walk straight out from Stazione Termini train station, across several piazze and traffic circles, just beyond Piazza Della Repubblica and up to the right. It's open Monday to Saturday from 9 am to 7 pm.



Foods To Try

Alleso di Bollito

Artichokes

Cacio e Pepe

Maritozzi

Pizza al Taglio

Supplì

Porchetta

Trapizzino

Drinks To Try

Vino Rosso

Prosecco

Bellini

Limoncello

Grappa

Espresso



Photography Hot Spots

Aventine Hill

The Colosseum

Vatican Museums

Antico Forno Roscioli

Giardino Degli Aranci (The Garden of Oranges)

Castel Sant'Angelo

Tor Caldara

Fori Imperiali

Souvenirs To Buy

Ceramics

Gourmet Food

Houseware

Hand-Painted Paper

Perfumes

Engraved Marble Tablets

Architecturally-Inspired Jewelry



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